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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Draft framework for the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 4 of resolution 1989/72, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General, in preparing the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation, to give high priority to an analysis of the main indicators of social ~~progress and~~ standards of living, and to make a comprehensive analysis of the main causes and circumstances that explain negative trends in those indicators. In the same paragraph, it was stated that chapters devoted to the study of specific social problems must be related to the global economic and social situations, taking into account both national and international conditions.

2. In paragraph 5 of resolution 1991/4, the Council requested the Secretary-General, in preparing the 1993 Report, to take into account the intrinsic relationship between economic growth and social development and to analyse in depth the economic problems of the developing countries and the impact of those problems on the world social situation. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to reorient the draft framework for the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation presented in the "interim report of the Secretary-General on the world social situation" (A/46/56-E/1991/6 and Corr.1) so that the draft framework was in consonance with the requests set forth in paragraph 4 of Council resolution 1989/72, and to submit it to the Council for consideration at its regular session of 1992. In resolution 46/95, the General Assembly endorsed the Council's request.

3. The reoriented draft framework, which has been prepared in accordance with the requests of the Council and the General Assembly, is presented below.

REORIENTED DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR THE 1993 REPORT ON THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION

Chapter I

RECENT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

4. Chapter I will examine the intrinsic relationship between economic growth and social development and relate various parts of the Report to the global economic and social situation, taking into account both national and international conditions. These national and international conditions include the variegated economic performance in developing and developed countries in an international economic climate that, while permitting some countries to develop at a rapid pace, has constrained the rate of growth of others by limiting import capacity, by restraining the demand for major exports resulting in a fall in export prices and by inflicting other losses of resources from substantial transfers on account of payments for international debt service. Transfers on capital account from the rest of the world have not adequately compensated for such losses. Those international conditions have in turn imposed restraints on government expenditure on social services that have had adverse impacts on the social situation. The adverse impacts on the social situation have been most severe in the least developed countries, mostly in Africa, and in several middle-income countries, mostly in Latin America.

5. There has been a highly visible drop in international tensions, leading to major accomplishments and promising prospects for the diversion of resources from armaments to other uses. Several theatres of war in developing countries have been closed, with excellent opportunities for the improvement of social conditions. However, the major international conflict in the period 1990-1991 in the Persian Gulf region caused a marked worsening in social conditions in the countries immediately affected by war and in those that lost economic opportunities on account of hostilities.

6. There were significant international agreements and decisions to improve the world social situation. Among these, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, adopted by the General Assembly in December 1990, had the broadest coverage and almost universal acceptance by the international community. The Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, both adopted in September 1990, similarly sought to improve economic and social conditions in the developing countries. The World Summit for Children, held in September 1990, sought, among other things, to improve living conditions for children. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in June 1992, is expected to arrive at international arrangements that permit economic growth, essential for eradicating poverty, without permanent damage to the environment.

7. In addition, widespread acceptance of a new paradigm of development has arisen. Within that paradigm, initiative, innovation and enterprise have been identified as distinctly more important contributors to development than hitherto. In the process, a redefinition of the function of Government in economic and social development has been sought. This new paradigm also includes a renewed emphasis on eradicating poverty, raising standards of health and education and equalizing the status of women and men. The emphases on initiative and enterprise, improvements in living conditions and the limited role of Government have raised new issues regarding the relationship of the individual to the State. While the collapse of communism in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Eastern European States has been the most visible demonstration of those issues, they also have been conspicuous in many developing countries.

8. In contrast to the emergence of these international agreements, declarations and perceptions, economic and social conditions have continued to worsen in a large number of developing countries, mostly in Africa and Latin America. Internecine warfare has destroyed economic opportunities and created large masses of refugees fleeing to other countries or other parts of their own countries. Natural disasters in the form of earthquakes, floods and droughts have wreaked destruction and misery on large populations, making refugees out of some of them. However, a large proportion of the world's population living in China, India, Indonesia and the rest of Asia, and elsewhere have achieved remarkable social progress and improvements in living conditions.

9. These contrasts ought to bring under careful scrutiny the importance of domestic policies for social progress and the improvement of living conditions. Many developing countries and former centrally planned economies have had to adopt policies of economic stabilization to control inflation and to make rapid structural adjustments in response to tightening import restraints, accelerate growth of export earnings, reduce the workload of Governments and generally improve the allocation of domestic resources. In the short-term, at least, those policies and adjustments have resulted in loss of employment, lower incomes, a cutting down on social services and a disintegration of the social protection net. At the same time, there is evidence that there has been no deterioration (which might have been expected from strained economic circumstances and the drastic drop in public sector resources) in areas covered by such social indicators as infant and child mortality rates and literacy and school enrolment rates. Such evidence points to coping mechanisms and a more productive use of resources in those areas.

10. The specific social problems studied in part two of the 1993 Report will be discussed in relation to the global economic and social conditions highlighted above, taking into account both national and international conditions.

Part One

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

11. Part one of the 1993 Report will be organized as follows:

Chapter

II.	POPULATION
II.1	Size, distribution, density, growth, urbanization, internal migration (using 1990 round of census)
II.2	Fertility, mortality, age composition, dependency ratio, problems of ageing
II.3	Household size, female-headed households
II.4	Workforce, participation of women
II.5	International migration
II.6	Implications for social policy
III.	HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND FOOD SUPPLIES
III.1	Malnutrition (both in developing and developed countries)
III.2	Vitamin deficiencies
III.3	Food supplies, especially in Africa and the former centrally planned economies
III.4	Food prices and distribution
III.5	Famine and hunger
III.6	The most vulnerable groups and countries
III.7	Recent changes in food policies
IV.	HOUSING AND SANITATION
IV.1	Indicators: housing, water, waste disposal
IV.2	Homelessness
IV.3	New policies and policy instruments in the housing sector

Chapter

V. EDUCATION AND LITERACY

V.1 Indicators of education: enrolment by level and by sex

V.2 Literacy; newspapers and books; radios, television sets

V.3 Educational input: schools, teachers, equipment

V.4 Access and equity: sex, regional, urban and rural

V.5 New concerns regarding the importance of education and policy responses

VI. HEALTH

VI.1 Indicators of health: infant mortality rate, under-five-years-of-age mortality rate, life expectancy

VI.2 Morbidity patterns, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)

VI.3 Immunization efforts

VI.4 Health-care input (doctors, nurses, hospitals)

VI.5 Access and equity: sex, regional, urban and rural

VI.6 Major directions for policy

VII. UNEMPLOYMENT AND LOW-PRODUCTIVITY EMPLOYMENT

VII.1 Magnitude of the problem in all groups of countries in the new circumstances

VII.2 Developing countries: low-productivity employment and the educated unemployed

VII.3 Developed countries: the new entrants and the long-term unemployed

VII.4 Former centrally planned economies: a new phenomenon

VII.5 Unemployment among women

VII.6 Policy responses

Chapter

VIII. INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND POVERTY

VIII.1 Income levels and differences among countries

VIII.2 Distribution within countries (changes both in developed and developing countries)

VIII.3 Poverty

VIII.4 Policy responses

IX. EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

IX.1 Patterns of government expenditures on social services, taking into consideration government expenditure for military purposes and for debt servicing, as well as the potential impact of disarmament

IX.2 Distribution: urban, rural, regional

IX.3 Private sector expenditure

IX.4 The role of Government, other organizations and family care

IX.5 New concerns regarding the efficacy and efficiency of traditional means of delivering these services

X. QUALITY OF LIFE

X.1 Significance of the question in considering social conditions

Arbitrariness of composite indices in giving weight to components

Qualitative analysis

Associations between indicators discussed in previous chapters and quality of life

X.2 Crime, violence, delinquency and homelessness

Domestic violence, especially against women and children

Suicide rate

Chapter

X.3 Experience of former centrally planned economies where basic needs had been met

Dissatisfaction with the poor quality of goods and services, shortages, totalitarian control by Government

Desire to speak and associate freely

X.4 Isolation from civil and cultural life

Isolation in developing countries without infrastructure and in the small island countries

Isolation of the aged and the disabled

Traditional sources of entertainment

Access to books, newspapers, television and other sources of entertainment and information

X.5 Leisure and how it is used

Increase in leisure time available to the mass of the people as productivity increases

Use of leisure time

Travel and tourism and adverse effects on areas toured

X.6 Consideration of measures, policies and activities to raise the quality of life

Part Two

MAJOR ISSUES AND DILEMMAS

Chapter XI

MAJOR CHANGES IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

12. Fundamental economic and social institutions have been subject to upheaval in many countries and to radical change in some others. There has been a decisive shift in favour of the private ownership and usufruct of property. The most striking instances are in the former centrally planned economies and in several developing countries. Governments have become less totalitarian and more democratic in form. Institutions espousing human rights, greater equity in the process of development and environmental concerns have become distinctly more vociferous and visible than a decade ago. Cumulative reassessment of the role of the State and Government in the economy and in society has reached the point of a qualitative change in the perception of that role. The organization of offices, factories and other workplaces has been subject to new influences stemming from the advent of new technology and the spread of patterns prevalent in East Asia - prominently so in Japan and the Republic of Korea. Families have been continuing their evolution at a more rapid pace subject to changes in areas that include urbanization, employment of women outside the home, family size and mores. New States have emerged and some intergovernmental organizations have been dissolved; others have been severely challenged while still others have radically changed on account of new relations between countries. Such changes have dramatically affected the lives of millions of people. This chapter will take account of those changes and discuss their consequences for society and individuals.

Chapter XII

NEW CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL SECURITY POLICIES

13. In this chapter social security, as distinct from the many social services and other provisions of the welfare State, is understood as encompassing maintenance transfers that protect individual citizens from risks associated with disability, loss of employment, retirement, inadequate purchasing power and other contingencies. While social security provisions have a redistributive function that may on balance be progressive or regressive, they also have redistributive implications for the younger working population and the retired, the employed and the unemployed, the healthy and the sick, and the able and the disabled. These transfers payments were welcomed by society on both economic and humanitarian grounds. In a context of rapid and sustained economic growth, such transfers were relatively painless and their price was politically acceptable. Owing to more difficult times and for other reasons, social security policies have now been challenged.

14. New challenges have arisen for social security systems in all parts of the world. In most developed countries, problems are due to an environment characterized by slow economic growth, persistently high unemployment levels, ageing populations and changes in family structure. In some cases, social security policies may have increased dependency among certain social groups and contributed to long-term unemployment as well. Debate has also focused on possible trade-off dilemmas between social security policies on the one hand and the importance of a flexible labour supply for economic growth and improved competitiveness in international trade on the other. With rising public expenditure, transfers such as food subsidies have become unendurable burdens in several developing countries. These developments have made it increasingly difficult financially and politically to provide benefits at levels commensurate with need and demand. Growing unemployment and economic stagnation aggravate the problem. More significantly, social security systems often contribute to income and social inequality in developing countries as a result both of the ways in which they are financed and of the ways in which the benefits are allocated. This appears to be a problem that is nearly insoluble politically. As for the former centrally planned economies, their challenge is mainly one of setting up an adequate safety net to protect workers who are unemployed due to market reforms and of maintaining the value of pensions during periods of high inflation.

Chapter XIII

INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION OF COMMUNITIES

15. The integration and disintegration of communities are the combined effects of seemingly contradictory sets of forces. There is much evidence of disintegration in many developing countries and in Eastern Europe. New communities declare themselves nations and resort to armed struggle to establish new States. Such divisions occur on account of ethnic and religious differences that erupt into prominence often after having lain dormant for long stretches of time. A greater degree of freedom from ruling powers, divergent patterns and varying intensities of development among regions, a new consciousness of historical differences and the spread of ethnic conflicts from one country to another all contribute to bringing about these conflicts. However, there are also striking instances of societies seeking greater cohesion in regional integration in order to promote prosperity and peace. Peoples with a shared cultural heritage have tended to come together prompted by the advantages of a larger market and a desire for greater political power internationally. New technology that permits the rapid exchange of information has helped in such processes. The interaction among, and the direction of, these processes will be explored in this chapter. In the short run, international intervention helps avert disasters. In the long run, decentralization of power, protection of minorities, tolerance among communal groups and collaboration in the pursuit of common objectives form the bases for feasible solutions.

Chapter XIV

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

16. Damage to the environment is caused by consumption patterns (involving waste disposal and damage to life-support systems and ecosystems), exploitation of major resources (land, water, forests and plant life) and some techniques of production (generating toxic waste). Continuing rapid population growth is generating unprecedented pressures. High levels of consumption in developed countries generate enormous amounts of waste matter, some of which threatens the destruction of gases that enable life on earth. That resource-intensive patterns and techniques of production have destroyed waterways, topsoils and sources of marine life, has now become evident, especially in the former centrally planned economies. Forests have been destroyed through both overuse and release of toxic substances. The disposal of toxic waste has created enormous problems. In developing countries, natural resources have been overexploited for survival. The extent of these adverse consequences for the environment will be discussed over a wide variety of countries.

17. The rest of the chapter will discuss the nature of policies and policy instruments that enable sustainable development. An account of experience with alternative policy instruments will be provided . Significant policy initiatives at the international level, including those connected with the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, will also be discussed.

Chapter XV

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

18. The accumulation of scientific knowledge and its application in production processes during the last several decades have been resulting in a veritable revolution in technology over the last quarter of this century. These new approaches are having widespread economic and social consequences. Since the process is still unfolding, some consequences can be seen only in the distance, while others are conspicuously evident in present-day society. It is obvious that the capacity of countries to adopt this technology depends not on their capacity to invent it but on the availability of entrepreneurs to exploit new opportunities, on the volume of new investment to enable the embodiment of such technology and on a highly educated, skilled workforce with the know-how to bring about that embodiment.

19. The advances in information technology, biotechnology and the material sciences will be briefly noted, with some indication of their prospective applications.

20. One of the most visible consequences of those advances has been the knitting closer together of all parts of the world, whether in news-gathering, data flows, financial transactions or the exchange of other information. The

new technology has effectively broken down national boundaries with regard to the flow of information. Computer-assisted design and manufacture have become an efficient means of producing commodities for discriminating consumers and have probably reduced the comparative advantage of labour-cheap economies in producing certain of those commodities. Numerically controlled machine tools have inflicted a certain amount of "de-skilling" on the labour force. Productivity has risen massively in certain secretarial and clerical jobs, and management is receiving powerful assistance from computers and information systems. Some of the consequences are likely to affect women adversely. Others are changing organizational structures. Still others are contributing to the decentralization of work, in contrast with the factory system, whose tendency to gather workers together in large numbers enabled them to organize as a countervailing power. The new technology is affecting homes: they are becoming workplaces into which enormous amounts of information can be fed. Through its advances, programming is competing very closely with human intelligence, so as to be able to increasingly undertake more of the very functions that have been considered unique to that intelligence.

21. Biotechnology has wide applications in crop agriculture, animal husbandry, the discovery and production of pharmaceutical drugs, the practice of medicine, human reproduction and many other areas. The capacity to alter and otherwise affect genes has created a technology with far-reaching consequences, of which only a few are yet visible. That much of the new knowledge is being discovered and held (through private ownership) by corporations enables those corporations to earn fees from every new application. In contrast, green revolution technology was mostly public property and available to the public at little cost. The new technology also challenges long-accepted legal norms regarding ownership, as in the case of genes that are taken from a person and altered by a technician, the copies subsequently being sold on the market. Similar ethical and legal problems emerge from the new mechanics of human reproduction. A society's capacity to identify the function of each gene and substitute others enables that society to write in its own preferences with regard to animal and human personality. Such practices are starkly contrary to processes of natural evolution and also challenge deeply held humanistic views about equality among humans.

22. Advances in the material sciences have made feasible the application of some of the above-mentioned technology. At the same time, those advances have caused economies in the consumption of natural raw materials and constituted substitutes for them, in some instances damaging the economic fortunes of producers in developing countries.

23. The content of education and training will need to be widely reconsidered in order to absorb the new technology. The destruction on the creative plane caused by this technology will require new investments, which may themselves be more short-lived than those under earlier technology, thereby raising the demand for savings. New vulnerable groups will emerge as these effects bite into society on a large scale. New legal concepts and regulatory devices will need to be developed to meet the challenges posed by the new technology.

Chapter XVI

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND NARCOTIC DRUG ABUSE

24. The abuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is a personal, family, community and international problem affecting almost every country. The extent of drug abuse and the distribution of users vary from region to region. Although quantification is difficult, total costs to society from drug abuse are substantial. There are direct costs to pay for alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Indirect costs include suffering, ill-health and premature death. Costs in human suffering and human life are manifest in the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) among intravenous users of drugs and in the increasing numbers of critically ill and severely handicapped infants who are born to infected mothers (both legal and illegal drug abusers). There are substantial losses of work time as well as loss of life in the course of industrial and traffic accidents caused by people who are impaired by alcohol or drugs. Care and police activity to prevent drug abuse also constitute large indirect costs. Other social implications of drug abuse, such as the deterioration of life in urban centres, are less well quantified and documented than the health consequences but represent an equally serious problem. At the same time, the production and distribution of alcohol, tobacco and narcotic drugs provide a livelihood to a sizeable workforce and can be a lucrative source of income even to peasants in developing countries.

25. Since the problem is multifaceted, all feasible solutions must encompass measures to control drug production and trafficking as well as curb demand, prevent addiction, rehabilitate and socially reintegrate addicts, and provide alternative sources of income to producers.

26. This chapter will first present estimates for the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. It will also assess the negative social and economic consequences arising from such consumption. It will then proceed to discuss measures to reduce the demand for alcohol, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; control production and supply; and intercept drug trafficking. The chapter will conclude with a review of bilateral, interregional and international action against drug abuse.

Chapter XVII

CONCLUSIONS

27. Conclusions relating to the discussions on policy issues appearing in each chapter will be presented in the final chapter.

28. Policies and activities for international cooperation that ensue from those conclusions will be articulated.